UNITED
NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

ST/AI/418
30 April 1997

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY OF STAFF MEMBERS FROM OTHER CATEGORIES*

1. The present administrative instruction, which governs the competitive examinations scheduled to be held between 26 and 30 January 1998 (written component) and in May/June 1998 (oral component), supersedes administrative instructions ST/AI/417 and Add.1 of 26 August and 17 October 1996, respectively. It is issued pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/173 of 29 August 1979 and takes into consideration the reports of the Central Examination Board (CEB) on the previous examinations and the recommendations made by the Staff/Management Coordination Committee as a result of its review of the procedures governing the competitive examination, and approved by the Secretary-General.

2. The purpose of the present instruction is to set out policies and procedures governing the selection of occupational groups for which the examination will be held, the selection of posts at the P-2 level subject to geographical distribution to be filled by promotion through the examination, the eligibility requirements for staff members wishing to sit for the examination, the organization of the examination and the selection and promotion of successful candidates. The selection of staff to fill Professional posts with special language requirements, such as posts of translators and editors, will continue to be made through separate competitive examinations.

* Personnel Manual index No. 4361.

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Selection of posts

3. The Office of Human Resources Management, taking into account information provided by departments and offices at all duty stations, has established projections of the P-2 posts subject to geographical distribution that will be or are expected to become available in the 12 months preceding placement. On the basis of these projections, CEB has made an initial identification of the occupational groups for which the examination is to be held, namely:

Administration

Electronic Data Processing

Finance

Political Affairs

Statistics

4. The written portion of all examinations will be held between 26 and 30 January 1998.

5. The total number of posts to be selected for this purpose will be approximately 30 per cent of the number of P-2 posts subject to geographical distribution that became available during the previous calendar year. However, in view of the possible budgeting constraints during the biennium 1998-1999, the number of P-2 posts available could be less than the number of posts identified for promotions in previous years' examinations. The remaining P-2 posts will be filled through the recruitment of external candidates or the reassignment of staff members already in the Professional category.

6. Prior to the oral examination, candidates convoked for that part of the examination will receive from the Office of Human Resources Management a list, approved by CEB, of all the posts available in the relevant occupational group and will be requested to indicate in order of preference those posts for which they wish to be considered. In addition to the list of posts, candidates will also receive a description of the functions for those posts. It should be noted that an expression of preference by a candidate for a particular post at a given duty station indicates the staff member's readiness to serve in that post at the duty station where it is located, if successful in the examination. The oral examination will not be held before the list of posts is available for distribution to the candidates concerned.

Applications

7. Staff members are invited to apply for one of the occupational groups in which the examination is to be held. However, in certain cases as defined in paragraph 9, some candidates may be eligible to apply for two of the occupational groups in which the examination is to be held. An application form is annexed to the present instruction.

Eligibility requirements

8. The competitive examination is open to all staff members in the General Service and related categories, including the Field Service category up to and including the FS-5 level, provided that they have a minimum of five years' continuous service in the Secretariat, have a satisfactory record of performance (the most recent performance evaluation report must also be submitted with the application), have a contract valid until at least 30 June 1998 and meet the requirements set out below. National professional officers who are recruited locally to perform functions at the Professional level are not considered eligible to take this examination since they are not in the General Service or related category. It should be noted that short breaks in service may be allowed at the discretion of CEB.

9. For those staff members who have served a minimum of five years of continuous service in the Secretariat by 31 December 1997 the following shall apply: they must hold at least a first-level university degree equivalent to a bachelor's degree, proof of which must be furnished with the application form. The university degree should be broadly related to the occupational group in which the candidate has applied. However, as indicated in paragraph 7, staff members who have a degree or degrees broadly related to two occupational groups may apply to take the examinations in each of these two occupational groups. CEB will determine the eligibility of all applicants in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management.

10. In order to protect the acquired rights of long-serving staff, it has been decided that for those staff members who had served AT LEAST FIVE YEARS by 31 December 1989, the following requirements shall apply: they must submit with their application acceptable evidence of post-secondary academic qualifications. CEB will determine the eligibility of all applicants in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management.

11. For those staff members who have sat for previous competitive examinations, the following shall also apply, in addition to the requirements stipulated in either paragraph 9 or 10 above:

(a) They must have achieved a mark of at least 30 per cent in the overall written portion of the previous examination in the occupational group(s) for which they are now applying;

(b) In cases where the staff member did not obtain 30 per cent, the staff member should submit to CEB tangible proof in detail of their preparations for the new examination (e.g., transcripts of university-level courses, material used, field work). Failure to submit such evidence will result in the staff member's ineligibility to sit for the examination.

12. Staff members who had previously served continuously for at least five years with the United Nations Secretariat, had resigned and, by 31 December 1997, would have served continuously for at least three years since their reappointment will also be considered eligible, provided that they meet the other requirements.

13. Staff members who have been found ineligible by CEB to sit for the examination will be informed of the reason for that decision. Staff members who have cause to believe that they have been unfairly excluded from participating in the examination may appeal to CEB for review. Such appeals must be received by CEB at Headquarters within 10 working days of the receipt of notification of rejection. In order to meet this deadline, candidates serving at offices away from Headquarters must submit their appeal to the Chairperson of CEB by telegram or fax (212) 963-3683.

Format and substance of the examination

14. The examination will be conducted in such a way as to take into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of the United Nations and will consist of both a written and an oral examination:

(a) Written examination (80 per cent of the marks). The written examination consists of two parts: part I, general examination; and part II, specialized examination. The general examination consists of section 1, analytical capacity; section 2, capacity to draft and to summarize; and section 3, international affairs. The general examination is a core examination which is common to all occupations. The specialized examinations test knowledge of the occupations;

(b) Oral part (20 per cent of the marks). The oral examination is designed to evaluate the following: the candidates' ability to communicate and convey their views in a clear, understandable and concise way; initiative; adaptability; negotiating skills and potential for leadership with respect to the relevance of these performance indicators to the functions concerned. Accordingly, cases, topics and questions used in the oral examination will be of a general nature, broadly related to the occupational group.

15. As a matter of principle, all the examination papers will follow a similar format. A standardized format will also be followed in the oral examination.

16. The written examination for a given occupational group will be administered simultaneously at all duty stations. It will be scheduled so as to permit candidates who have applied and have been accepted for more than one occupational group to complete the required papers. Eligible candidates will be informed in writing of the exact date, time and location of the written examination. The use of non-programmable calculators is permitted in all parts of the examination. Staff members who have to sit for the examination outside established working hours will be granted compensatory time off.

Composition and responsibility of the Central Examination Board

17. CEB is composed of five members appointed by the Secretary-General: a chairperson selected from among staff serving at Headquarters, with the concurrence of the representatives of the staff; two members nominated by the representatives of the staff, one of whom will be from a duty station away from Headquarters; and two members nominated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, one of whom will be from a third duty station. The membership of CEB for the seventeenth round of the examination will remain in

office until the Board is reconstituted for the eighteenth round of the examination. CEB will have a non-voting ex officio member representing the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management.

18. CEB has the following responsibilities:

(a) To oversee the procedures and arrangements for the examination;

(b) To screen all applications and determine the eligibility of candidates to sit for the examination;

(c) To review appeals and complaints of candidates regarding the examination process;

(d) To select and approve, on the basis of a list of projections provided by the Office of Human Resources Management, the posts to be filled through the competitive examinations;

(e) To review and decide upon recommendations made by the specialized boards, especially on arrangements for the marking of papers; recommendations on which candidates are to be convoked to the oral examination, based on results of the written examination; recommendations on the attainment of the minimum professional standards required for promotion and recommendations for the promotion of successful candidates;

(f) To establish the final ranking of candidates and then, taking into account the expressions of preference by the candidates, to assign the posts to the successful candidates;

(g) To make recommendations to the Secretary-General regarding procedures for and possible improvements in future examinations;

(h) To recommend, pursuant to paragraph 3 above, which occupational groups will be selected for the next examination.

Composition and responsibility of the specialized boards

19. A specialized board of examiners will be set up for each occupational group selected for the examination. An additional board of examiners will be set up to mark the general examination paper. Specialized boards will normally be composed of staff members of the Secretariat; however, staff members of the specialized agencies or outside experts may also be employed in agreement between representatives of the Secretary-General and representatives of the staff.

20. Each specialized board of examiners will be appointed by the Secretary-General and will consist of a chairperson elected by the members of the specialized board, at least two members nominated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and an equal number of members nominated by the representatives of the staff. Each specialized board will have a non-voting ex officio member representing the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management.

21. Under the overall responsibility of CEB, the specialized boards will:

(a) Mark the written examination;

(b) Report to CEB the results of the written examination, which will consist of the consolidated mark of the general paper and the specialized papers;

(c) Make recommendations to CEB regarding the minimum professional standard required;

(d) Recommend to CEB the number of candidates (who are not identified by name) to be convoked to the oral examination for each occupational group, based on the results of the written examination;

(e) Conduct the oral examination;

(f) Recommend to CEB the final ranking of candidates (who are not identified by name) in order of merit by occupational group, based on the total of the combined results of the written and oral examinations.

Responsibility of the Examinations and Tests Section

22. In accordance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/Organization, section P (II), the Examinations and Tests Section has administrative responsibility for conducting the examinations.

23. Based on the recommendations of the Staff/Management Coordination Committee, as approved by the Secretary-General, and in close cooperation with CEB, the Examinations and Tests Section is responsible for:

(a) Ensuring the preparation and validity of examination materials;

(b) Ensuring the confidentiality of all materials and providing for security at all stages of the examination process;

(c) Coordinating with designated Secretariat staff the preparation of materials at different stages of the examination;

(d) Arranging for the issuance of an information circular and of sample examination papers;

(e) Making arrangements for simultaneous worldwide conduct of the examinations;

(f) Convoking all candidates to the written and oral examination, after consultation with CEB;

(g) Ensuring the objectivity of examination procedures at all stages of the examination, working in close cooperation with CEB and the specialized boards;

(h) Providing ex officio members for CEB, each specialized board and for the general paper as representatives of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management;

(i) Working directly with consultants and at the same time ensuring maximum security;

(j) Arranging for the production and printing of all materials under maximum security conditions;

(k) Arranging for the dispatch of materials to, and storage at, examination locations, under maximum security conditions;

(l) Providing support and assistance to the examination at all stages.

Languages of the examination

24. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/235 D of 21 December 1982, candidates participating in the examination shall be permitted to take the examination in any of the working languages of the regional commissions, with due regard to the requisite proficiency in one of the working languages of the Secretariat. In order to demonstrate such proficiency, all candidates will have to take section 2 of the general paper in either English or French. Alternatively, candidates may elect to take the whole written examination in a working language of a regional commission other than English or French and to sit for a special language test in either English or French. Normally, the oral examination must be taken in either English or French. However, candidates may also opt to take the portion of the oral examination dealing with the ability to communicate in one of the official languages of the regional commissions other than in English or French. Additional information on the format of the written examination as well as lists of topics that may be helpful in preparing for the examination will be included in a separate information circular and will, to the extent possible, be made available in all the languages of the regional commissions. Sample questions are available at all duty stations.

Marking of the examination

25. The specialized board of examiners for each occupational group will organize the marking of the examination papers, which will remain anonymous. Each specialized board will then submit to CEB a list of the candidates (who are not identified by name) in ranking order, with its recommendation on the number of candidates to be convoked to the oral examination on the basis of the results of the written examination. The number of candidates convoked for the oral part of the examination will normally be three times the number of posts available in that occupational group, it being understood that more or fewer candidates may be convoked if CEB considers it to be warranted. The oral examinations will be graded separately by each member of the specialized board of examiners interviewing the candidates, without taking into account the grading of the written examination.

26. The candidates for each occupational group will be ranked on the basis of their combined scores in the written and oral parts of the examination. Bearing in mind the provision of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/173 that the competitive examination procedure is to "provide eligible staff members with an opportunity to compete for selected posts for which they qualify" and taking into account the level of difficulty of the examination as a whole, the specialized boards will make recommendations as to the level above which the candidates will be considered to be qualified to perform at the Junior Professional level. The final ranking of the candidates by occupational groups will be established by CEB on the basis of these recommendations. The recommendation concerning the qualification of candidates to perform at the Junior Professional level and the final ranking will be carried out with full respect for anonymity.

Allocation of posts and promotion

27. Successful candidates will be promoted against the posts selected for the examination. The Office of Human Resources Management, in cooperation with CEB, will be responsible for the assignment of successful candidates to posts in the occupational groups in which they have succeeded after taking into account, in order of priority, the ranking of the candidates in the examinations and the stated preferences of the candidates. In the event that within an occupational group there is an unused post (or posts) because there were insufficient candidates meeting the requirements to perform at the Junior Professional level, the unused quota would be allocated to the occupational group that has the largest number of unplaced successful candidates, up to the limit of available posts in that occupational group. Should there be two or more occupational groups with the same number of successful unplaced candidates, the unused quota would then be allocated to that occupational group with the smallest number of candidates who have been placed.

28. CEB will make the final recommendations to the Secretary-General with regard to the assignment of successful candidates. When approved by the Secretary-General, the recommendations of CEB will be implemented.

29. Successful candidates will normally be expected to serve at least three years in their new post. Candidates who do not wish to be assigned to the post or posts available to them relinquish ipso facto their claim to promotion under the competitive examination and consequently the next ranked unplaced candidate who has been certified as having met the minimum professional standard for promotion will be offered the post after confirmation by CEB. If a candidate who is promoted separates from the Organization within six months of the implementation of the promotion, the next ranked unplaced candidate who has been certified as having met the minimum professional standard for promotion will be offered the post after confirmation by CEB. In the event that no candidate is available in the relevant occupational group, the unused quota should be allocated to the occupational group that has the largest number of unplaced successful candidates, up to the limit of available posts in that occupational group. Should there be two or more occupational groups with the same number of successful unplaced candidates, the unused quota would then be allocated to that occupational group with the smallest number of candidates who have been placed.

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30. After the approval of the Secretary-General of the recommendations of CEB, no additional posts will be considered for placement of candidates from that year's examination.

31. All successful candidates in the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories will be recommended for promotion to the P-2 level. The salary step at the P-2 level will be determined on the basis of staff rule 103.9 on salary policy in promotions. At duty stations where a General Service staff member's remuneration, when computed for promotion purposes under that rule, exceeds the ceiling step of P-2, the staff member will be paid a personal transitional allowance in an amount sufficient to meet the requirements of that rule. As a result of the post adjustment system, a loss in net compensation may be experienced for staff who change duty stations.

32. The names of the successful candidates placed will appear in the information circular on appointments, promotions and other staff changes, which is issued on a regular basis. The effective date of promotion of the successful candidates will be the first day of the month in which they assume the functions of the post for which they have been selected.

Informing candidates of results

33. The Examinations and Tests Section will, upon completion of the examination, communicate in writing to all candidates their ranking achieved in each section of the written examination as well as whether or not they achieved a mark of 30 per cent or higher in the overall written part of the examination. Those candidates who have taken the oral examination will also be given their ranking in that part of the examination.

General

34. Staff members who have complaints with respect to the procedures and arrangements for the examination should contact CEB within 10 working days of the event which gave rise to the complaint.

35. The Office of Human Resources Management will provide a secretariat to service the boards.

36. In the light of experience with the examinations, the procedures will be reviewed and modified as necessary.

Annex

APPLICATION FOR THE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY OF STAFF MEMBERS FROM OTHER CATEGORIES

(United Nations Secretariat staff members only)

All correspondence with candidates will be conducted on the basis of the information given. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CANDIDATES TO INFORM THE SECRETARY OF CEB OF ANY CHANGES IN THE INFORMATION INDICATED IN THE APPLICATION FORM.

N.B. The deadline for receipt of applications by CEB (United Nations Headquarters) is 30 June 1997.

SECTION I. PERSONAL DATA

Please type or print legibly.

Last name (family name): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

First name: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Date of birth: Day ☐☐ Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Sex: F ☐ M ☐ Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐ a/

Nationality: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Category: ☐☐ Present level: ☐☐

Date of entry in United Nations Secretariat: Day ☐☐ Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of appointment: Fixed term ☐ Probationary ☐ Permanent ☐

Expiration or review date: Day ☐☐ Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Main language: (Mother tongue) ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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Please check below the occupational group (or groups, where applicable) for which you wish to take the examination.

ADMINISTRATION ☐ EDP ☐ FINANCE ☐

POLITICAL AFFAIRS ☐ STATISTICS ☐

Date of latest performance evaluation report (PER/PAS): Day ☐☐ Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ b/

Please submit a copy of your latest performance evaluation report with your application.

Duty station: _____

Organizational unit: c/ _____

Department/Office: _____
(write in full)

Room No.: _____ Telephone No.: _____

Home telephone No.: _____ (Because of time differences at duty stations away from Headquarters, candidates are requested to indicate their home telephone number in order to facilitate communications of an urgent nature.)

1. Have you applied to take previous G-to-P examination(s)? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Were you convoked to sit for previous G-to-P examinations? No ☐

If yes, WHEN? 1980 ☐ 1982 ☐ 1983 ☐ 1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐ 1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ 1992 ☐ 1993 ☐ 1994 ☐ 1995/96 ☐ 1997 ☐

WHAT OCCUPATIONAL GROUP(S)?

If yes, did you actually take the examination? No ☐

Yes, in: 1980 ☐ 1982 ☐ 1983 ☐ 1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐ 1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ 1992 ☐ 1993 ☐ 1994 ☐ 1995/96 ☐ 1997 ☐

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a/ Usually appears on your monthly salary statement or grounds pass; if not, please contact your Personnel Officer to obtain your number.

b/ Must be within the normal reporting period of three years.

c/ Please select from this list: Headquarters, ECA, ECE, UNDRO, HR, UNOG, UNCTAD, UNOV, UNIC, ESCAP, ECLAC, ESCWA, UNTSO, UNMOGIP, UNIFIL, UNCHS or other (specify).

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## SECTION II. EDUCATION

List your qualifications at the secondary and post-secondary levels, indicating the certificate, diploma or degree received. ALL CANDIDATES, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR OR TAKEN A PREVIOUS G-TO-P EXAMINATION, MUST FORWARD A COPY OF THEIR UNIVERSITY DEGREE OR DIPLOMA, INCLUDING, WHEN AVAILABLE, A COPY OF AN UP-TO-DATE UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPT.

Written proof of post-secondary education MUST BE ATTACHED to this application. (Send photocopies, do not send any originals.) FAILURE TO PROVIDE PROOF WILL MEAN THAT THE APPLICATION WILL BE DISREGARDED.

| CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA OR DEGREE Exact title in original language. For work towards a degree, please list number of credits | INSTITUTION NAME PLACE COUNTRY | PERIOD OF STUDY Month Year | DESCRIPTION OF COURSES OR MAIN FIELD OF STUDY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Secondary studies | | From: 19 | |
| | | To: 19 | |
| Post-secondary studies | | From: 19 | |
| | | To: 19 | |
| | | From: 19 | |
| | | To: 19 | |
| | | From: 19 | |
| | | To: 19 | |
| | | From: 19 | |
| | | To: 19 | |

If you need more space, attach additional pages.

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## SECTION III. LANGUAGES

If you have successfully passed a United Nations language proficiency examination (LPE), please indicate the year you obtained the certificate. If you did not pass the LPE, indicate your level of ability below, using the following code letters: A = fluently, B = quite easily, C = not easily.

If you are or have been enrolled in any language courses, please indicate the institution and the highest level completed or the diploma obtained.

| Language | LPE year | Read | Understand | Speak | Write | Institution and diploma (period(s) of study) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

## SECTION IV. OCCUPATION(S) FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING

Name _____

Office _____

Room No. _____

Duty station _____

Country _____

Sex: F ☐ M ☐

Index No.: _____

Please check below the occupational group(s) for which you wish to take the examination. You may apply for no more than two occupational groups.

ADMINISTRATION ☐ EDP ☐ FINANCE ☐

POLITICAL AFFAIRS ☐ STATISTICS ☐

Indicate the language in which you wish to take the examination:

(a) Written part, general paper, sections 1 and 3 ☐

(b) Written part, general paper, section 2 ☐

(c) Written part, specialized paper ☐

(d) If you plan to take the portion of the oral examination dealing with ability to communicate in a working language of one of the regional commissions other than in English or French, please indicate the language ☐

(Write language in full for each part of the examination in appropriate boxes.)

If you plan to write section 2 in a working language of a regional commission, other than in English or French, please indicate in which of the working languages of the Secretariat you wish to take the special language test.

English ☐ French ☐

Main language (Mother tongue) ☐

Highest educational level:

High school ☐ Post-secondary ☐ BA ☐ MA ☐ Other (Ph.D., etc.) ☐

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SECTION V. CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED

Fully completed applications, together with proof of post-secondary education and of language ability (if you did not pass LPE or are not enrolled in a United Nations course), must be received by CEB NO LATER THAN 30 June 1997 in a sealed envelope marked CONFIDENTIAL, addressed to:

CENTRAL EXAMINATION BOARD SECRETARIAT
Office of Human Resources Management - Room S-2590A
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA
Fax: (212) 963-3683

For duty stations outside New York, please fax whenever possible. Where fax machine is not available, please use the United Nations pouch.

IMPORTANT: APPLICATIONS THAT ARE INCOMPLETE OR DO NOT INCLUDE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION MAY BE REJECTED.

I certify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge and I understand that any misrepresentation would lead to my elimination from the examination and to possible disciplinary action. I further understand that it is my responsibility to report immediately any changes in the above information to the Central Examination Board.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

List enclosures: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

☐ MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY OF STAFF MEMBERS FROM OTHER CATEGORIES

The information below will be used as your mailing label; please print or write legibly. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMEDIATELY REPORTING TO THE SECRETARY OF CEB ANY SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN DUTY STATION, EITHER PRIOR TO OR DURING THE EXAMINATION PROCESS.

CEB STAMP

Name _____
Office _____
Room No. _____
Duty station _____
Country _____

This portion will be returned to you as an acknowledgement of receipt of your application.

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